

FAQs: Lessons Learned from the 2012 Elections

Q: It used to be that Click and Mail registrations took a day before they loaded into SVRS. Is this still the case or does it happen immediately?

A: Immediately.

Q: Can you define "not earlier than 90 days before Election Day"? Is 91 days okay? Is 89 days okay? I receive a lot of questions about this.

A: 90 days or less.

Q: So 89 days is okay but 91 days is not?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the watermark be updated in the poll book to indicate, at the time of printing, which absentee ballots have been returned?

A: It's something that's being looked at by the IT team.

Q: A voter owns a house within the municipality that they would stay in when they were here. They now rent the house out, can they still vote within the municipality. The utility bills have been changed from their name to the renter's name.

A: Yes, if they are still registered there. They may have intent to return.

Q: Will GAB continue to let us know (municipalities) about pulling up the Ineligible Voter List? There are so many things to remember to do on elections now.

A: It's a step on the checklists we send out before each election and we will continue to do so.

Q: Are there only certain situations when people can register in the clerk's office on Election Day or can registration take place the entire day in the clerk's office?

A: Assuming you have a resolution in place and the clerk's office and polling place are in the same building as the clerk's office; you can conduct voter registration all day.

Q: For students who live on campus and we know they have a separate mailing address that is also on the campus, can the student use the mailing address as the "residential address" to register under? We have had this problem here and we believe the issue is being addressed, but am wondering if any other municipalities have ran into this problem.

A: If a student use the address where they physically live as the Residence Address in the Voter Registration Application (G.A.B. 131) and put the separate mailing address in the mailing address of the Voter Registration Application. It is important that the student list a specific address as the residence address not just a dorm name. For example, if a group of buildings all receive mail at a central building, the residence address should say 700 Franciscan Way Apt 422, and the mailing address for that residential address would be 702 Franciscan Way.

Q: What time frame should we be printing the Ineligible Voter List off for us to use within the office and at the polls?

A: In the office should be by the date of the close of registration, for the polls printing it when you print your poll book is fine.

Q: What if we use My Vote within the office when voters come in? Do we switch the application location from "Online Mail" to "Clerks Office" because we are the ones who entered it?

A: Yes, you should switch the application source to “clerk’s office” for the application. At some point we may create an application source of “online – clerk’s office” in SVRS, but for now you can just change it to “clerk’s office”.

Q: How would an elector even get an absentee ballot if he was required to provide POR? we wouldn't send out a ballot if he wasn't properly registered? Right?

A: A first-time voter by mail who did not include proof of residence may be issued an absentee ballot. They must include proper POR with the returned absentee ballot. If they do not, it is treated as a provisional ballot.

Q: Can you post your phone number on the door to be notified and come down to do it?

A: Should be on your Type E notice and need to be available until 5 pm.

Q: We are having a problem with a homeless voter finding an agency to get a letter verifying that he is homeless. Any suggestions?

A: They can register during open registration in the clerk's office and don't have to provide proof of residence.

Q: I heard of many election inspectors using insurance statements. Are insurance statements considered a valid form of POR?

A: Not unless the insurance statement is issued by a unit of government.

Q: I had a military voter get his ballot through MyVote last year, he was a registered voter. Do I need to notify him on the change of duration request or is it understood that if he wants to vote in any 2013 elections, he will simply use MyVote again?

A: UOCAVA (Military or Permanent Overseas) voters can go into MyVote, look up their name and date of birth, and then click on “Get Absentee Ballot” to submit their absentee ballot request. Through MyVote, UOCAVA voters can choose the election this year they want to vote absentee, or select all elections this year. They can also choose if they want to access their ballots online through MyVote, or if they want their ballot by mail or fax – in which case MyVote will notify you of their request.

Clerks are not required to notify any voters who previously voted absentee that they need to submit a new absentee request. However, reaching out to previous absentee voters, especially UOCAVA voters, and informing them they can request an absentee ballot for particular elections, or for every election in the calendar year, has some benefits.

First, reaching out to these voters early should help reduce the number of “last-minute” requests you receive close to an election. This could decrease your workload closer to Election Day, and help ensure that these voters have plenty of time to receive their absentee ballots and return them on time.

Second, particularly for UOCAVA voters it should help remind them to request ballots early and help you comply with the requirements of the MOVE Act. Failure to meet the MOVE Act requirements, particularly having absentee ballots available and transmitting ballots on time could result in another consent decree, more mandatory reporting requirements, additional costs to expedite ballot transit, US Department of Justice involvement, and undesirable media attention.

Q: If they vote provisionally because they couldn't provide their DL number on election day, can they call the clerk and give them the number over the phone before Friday or do they have to bring in something. Reason for asking is if they give you a made up number, they can say the clerk entered it wrong??

A: Yes, one option is to give it to the clerk over the phone. Keep in mind that they don't have to have the number with them on Election Day to list it on their registration form either, unless they are using the driver license as POR.

Q: How much longer will we have to conduct "early voting" in our offices under a process which is meant for mail-in absentee (envelopes)? For large municipalities, the sorting and resorting of thousands of in-person voted ballots is difficult to manage with servicing all the in-person absentee during office hours. We administered over 900 in-person voters one day, and continued to get pounded throughout the two weeks of "early voting". That would be fine, but then we're left with several more hours per day sorting envelopes for processing on Election Day! Maximum wait time was 45 minutes during early voting (we did issue from SVRS) with no more than 20 minutes on Election Day.

A: Absentee voting procedures are prescribed by state law. We have heard this from a number of clerks, but only the legislature can change the absentee process.

Q: How long should we let My Vote entries sit in a pending state before cancel/deleting them? ie. they started the process online but didn't follow through with getting the form to the clerk.

A: After 30 days after the election, cancel the application.

Q: TIP - we did 65% of our EDRs using myvote onsite (had 3 computers staffed) for the Presidential and it worked very well. People responded well to the process even though it took a couple minutes longer. Made clerk's job so much easier after the election!! (thank you GAB!!)

A: That is a great success story! Some of the major benefits of MyVote for clerks is that it helps reduce the amount of data entry required; it should improve the data quality in SVRS which result in more accurate poll lists and a better voter experience; hopefully with continued use by clerks and poll workers it should reduce the time needed to complete voter registrations.

Q: Where is it noted that the voter cannot register through MYVOTE during late registration?

A: Voters can use MyVote at ANY time to fill out and print the voter registration form. The registration period (open, late, or Election Day) determines the instructions they receive. During late registration, the on-screen instructions will tell the voter to print the form and bring it to the clerk's office with proof of residence. When the voter prints out the form, MyVote will also automatically print out these same instructions, as well as the clerk's office address.

Q: Kim says if there should be an error in the poll book and they issue a different ballot style than indicated in the poll book it is important that this be noted otherwise number of ballots and voters won't match for the district.

A: Thanks!

Q: If your office is closed Friday before the April Election (Good Friday) do we need to make special arrangements and be in the office Good Friday or can we close registration on Thursday.

A: Yes, we posted a memo on this topic: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2667>

Q: Why can't voters vote absentee in person when ballots are available along with the clerk being available and voter also?

A: State law prohibits in-person absentee voting until the 3rd Monday before an election.

Q: It would be more convenient and would not have to worry about dates/timelines.

A: Please contact your legislators.

Q: If it is appropriate in this webinar, since we were talking about recording voter participation, would it be possible to refer people to the Post Election Activities section of the SVRS Manual in which there is a sample of the City of Madison's Voter Participation Reconciliation form. I found this extremely helpful and wanted to make sure other clerks are aware of it.

A: Thanks Bridget!

Q: There was an exception made during in-person absentee voting for the Presidential Election which allowed us to do curbside at the Clerk's Office (which was not previously allowed). Is that still in effect?

A: Yes, it's an acceptable practice for all elections.

Q: Nursing home voting is complicated. Does the GAB anticipate drafting more detailed procedures for this process? EX: Is it expected that the SVD's visiting the homes are to go room to room and ask registered voters whether they want to vote? Do the SVD's solely rely on the nursing facility administrator to go and bring the voters to a central area only?

A: Yes, we are writing more detailed procedures and expect to have a more expansive "absentee voting in certain care facilities" manual available in March.

Q: What if they fill it out on My Vote but then send in a handwritten one. Are we required to hand input everything?

A: Yes, you would need to re-enter the information on the handwritten form. The application in SVRS must match the paper form, and the handwritten form would not have the online application number.

Q: Can the county dictate to the municipality the way polls books are printed? For example, we have election by wards but our wards are split by county districts. The county wants us to print polls books by their districts and not by our wards.

A: No. The county cannot dictate how the municipality organizes its reporting units/poll books unless it is contrary to statute (e.g. combining Assembly districts in the fall). Poll books should match reporting units, which should match how your equipment is programmed.

Q: We had people wanting to vote for the Presidential from out of state that were traveling - go over how to handle this

A: Residents from other states asking to vote presidential only? No.

Q: Absentee ballots to indefinitely confined can be mailed the Friday before the election? The cut-off is not Thursday?

A: The absentee ballot request deadline for indefinitely confined is 5 pm on the Friday before the election. For regular absentee, the *request by mail* deadline is 5 pm on the Thursday before the election, but can be mailed through Friday. Please refer to page 89 of the Election Administration Manual for request deadlines.

Q: If you did not send the 30 day notice, do we have to keep voters on the permanent list?

A: Yes, the voter may not be removed from the indefinitely confined list if they were not notified.

Q: Does the renewal year always start on January 1st of each year?

A: Yes, it goes by calendar year.

Q: Do you cancel the pending application in SVRS or MyVote after 30 days.

A: G.A.B. staff recommends that if you have a pending MyVote Registration in SVRS that you wait 30 days after an election before cancelling the pending voter application. This will help prevent you from having to manually enter all the information if a voter brings in the form after the election.

Q: Another question re: election integrity steps taken by the GAB. I think the audit completed by the GAB after general elections is worthwhile. When are the results of the audit of the Nov. 6, 2012 election to be made public? Also, what is the GAB policy about publishing the prosecution of electors who were found to have voted more than once in an election? Earlier in this presentation a presenter said that taxpayers who wish to vote in both tax districts where they pay taxes are identified as voting in two places in a single election. How often has this problem been substantiated and what is the rate of prosecution?

A: Regarding the audit, we hope by late winter/ early spring to be done with our report and any reconciliation efforts.

Q: Problem experienced with My Vote Wisconsin and military voter spouse. The wife of the military voter stationed in CA obtained a ballot electronically to vote in a town in Dane County. She registered as a voter in this town via My Vote Wisconsin, even though she was not eligible to vote in this town. She had last registered to vote while a student in Milwaukee, WI. The Dane County town processed her ballot and it counted in the Nov. 6, 2012 election. However, in the future I would like to know how this could be prevented. Also, how could one determine whether this voter also voted in CA for the Nov. 6, 2012 election? Such cross checks would help answer concerns from folks who distrust the election process.

A: Military voters, which include dependents like a spouse or child, do not have to meet the same registration requirements as regular voters. Military voters can decide what address they want to use for voting purposes. Regardless if they last voted somewhere else, if they choose to vote in your municipality they are allowed to do so, and this should not be prevented. If they voted in California, they should be noting on their registration that they last voted in Wisconsin, and then the State of California should notify the G.A.B.

Here is an example to illustrate this case. Assume we have two voters: a husband and wife, who met at college in Milwaukee. After college he joined the Marines and was stationed in California, and she now lives with him in California. She last voted in Milwaukee, while he last voted in Madison. Neither of them have a home or apartment in Wisconsin anymore, but they use his parents' house in the Town of Springdale as their residence (referred to as Home of Record in the military). Both the military husband and his wife can register and voter in the Town of Springdale. They have a valid address to use for voting purposes in your town. They

could also choose to vote from their last residence in Wisconsin – it is up to them to choose the address they want to use for voting.

Q: Can the challenge procedure be used during voting at the nursing homes by special voting deputies?

A: No, challenges can only occur at the polling place.